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ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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2138 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

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April 7, 2003

Honorable J. Dennis Hastert  
Speaker of the House  
Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.  
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker and Mr. Chairman:

We write to express our disappointment about the extraordinary break with Judiciary Committee precedent on April 3 when the Majority prematurely cut off full and fair debate on H.R. 1036, a controversial gun immunity bill, and to request immediate remedial action.

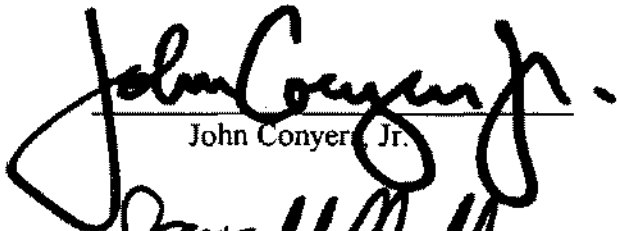
We strongly object to the Majority ordering the previous question before Committee Democrats were allowed the opportunity to offer reasonable amendments and fully debate the merits of such amendments. At the time the Majority terminated the markup, a mere forty minutes after the markup had begun, there were a dozen substantive Democratic amendments pending, including an amendment eliminating - in an extraordinary break with civil procedure - a "criminal conviction predicate," which would require conviction of criminal offense before civil relief could be obtained; and amendments concerning the impact of the bill on children and police officers, the rights of injured hunters and sportsmen, and pending cases. It should also be noted that no amendments had yet been disposed of when the Majority terminated the markup.

We totally reject attempts to justify this action through a specious claim that Democrats were somehow engaging in dilatory tactics. The impetus for terminating the markup was apparently Mr. Watt offering a one page amendment and indicating that he desired it to be fully read so that the Committee would know what it was debating and voting on. We find it inconceivable that the reading of a one page amendment could cause any undue delay and believe Mr. Watt's request was a reasonable one.

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Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.  
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To remedy this startling breach of procedural fairness and comity, we request that the Chairman reopen the markup and allow a full and fair debate of these amendments.

Sincerely,



John Conyer, Jr.



Jerrold Nadler



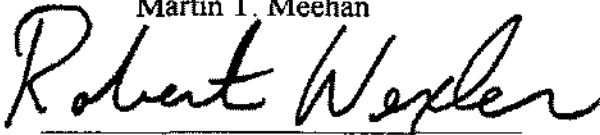
Melvin L. Watt



Sheila Jackson Lee



Martin T. Meehan



Robert Wexler



Anthony D. Weiner



Linda Sanchez



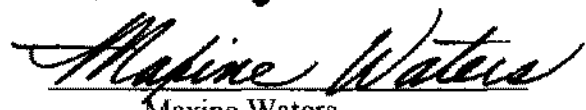
Howard L. Berman



Robert C. Scott



Zoe Lofgren



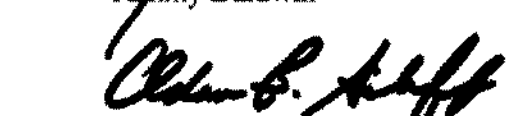
Maxine Waters



William D. Delahunt



Tammy Baldwin



Adam B. Schiff

cc: Hon. Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader